

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

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FOL RPT MANAGUA 3913 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO USICA GUATEMALA
SAN SALVADOR TEGUCIGALPA SAN JOSE PANAMA USSOUTHCOM QUARRY
HTS CANAL ZONE AUG 22, 1978

QUOTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANAGUA 3913

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, NU

SUBJECT: FSLN TAKES NATIONAL PALACE

REF: NUDELL/WELTER TELECOM DATED 22 AUGUST 1978

SUMMARY: AN ARMED GROUP OF FSLN HAS TAKEN OVER THE NATIONAL
PALACE AND IS HOLDING AN UNDISCLOSED NUMBER OF HOSTAGES. IT IS
REPORTED THAT THEY HAVE MADE SEVERAL DEMANDS THROUGH THE ARCH-
BISHOP. END SUMMARY.

1. BASED ON SEVERAL REPORTS, SOME UNCONFIRMED, EMB BELIEVES
THAT AT APPROXIMATELY 12:30 PM LOCAL TIME, A GROUP ESTIMATED
AT FROM 12-28 ARMED FSLN OCCUPIED THE NATIONAL PALACE.
CONGRESS WAS IN SESSION AT THE TIME. A FIRE FIGHT LASTED
FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS, AFTER WHICH, THE
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FSLN DEMANDED THAT THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN) WITHDRAW TO A
DISTANCE OF 200 YARDS AND THAT THE ARCHBISHOP AND TWO
OTHER BISHOPS (NO NAMES AVAILABLE) BE BROUGHT TO THE
SCENE.

2. THE GN COMPLIED WITH THESE DEMANDS AND BY 2:30 LOCAL
TIME, THE ARCHBISHOP WAS AT THE SCENE. THE FSLN REPORTEDLY

THEN MADE THE FOLLOWING DEMANDS: A) 10 MILLION DOLLARS;
B) AMNESTY AND THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS;
C) WITHDRAWAL OF THE GN FROM THE IMMEDIATE AREA;
D) PLANE TO TAKE THEM AND POLITICAL PRISONERS TO CUBA.
(NOTE: EMB HAS NOT AS YET RECEIVED CONFIRMATION
OF DEMANDS. END NOTE). THE ARCHBISHOP IS REPORTEDLY
INSIDE THE NATIONAL PALACE NEGOTIATING WITH THE FSLN.

3. EMB UNDERSTANDS THAT 40-45 DEPUTIES AND GON OFFICIALS
ARE BING HELD HOSTAGE. EMB HAS CONFIRMATION THAT
LUIS PALLAIS, PLN SPOKESMAN, DIRECTOR OF NOVEDADES AND
COUSIN TO SOMOZA; AND MINGOV MORA ARE AMONG HOSTAGES.
UNCONFIRMED REPORTS ALSO INCLUDE MINFINANCE GENIE AND
PCN LEADER RENE SANDINO AMONG HOSTAGES.

4. ONE GN OFFICER AND ONE CIVILIAN HAVE BEEN REPORTED KILLED.,
AND ONE GN SERGEANT WOUNDED. IT IS NOT YET KNOWN
IF THERE WERE OTHER CASUALTIES NOR IF ANY FSLN ARE
INJURED.

5. WHILE THE ABOVE WAS OCCURRING, ALL RADIO STATIONS WHICH
NORMALLY WOULD PROVIDE COVERAGE OF SUCH AN EVENT
TERMINATED NEWS BROADCASTS OR LEFT THE AIR ENTIRELY--
PERHAPS AS THE RESULT OF A TEMPORARY POWER OUTAGE TO WHICH
EMB WAS ALSO SUBJECT.

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UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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